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Connecticut Property Owners Alliance, Inc

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February 3, 2015.

Honorable Members of the Housing Committee,

I am Bob DeCosmo, president of the CTPOA representing the owners of approximately 16,000 rental units here in Connecticut. Today I wish to state that our organization;

SUPPORTS PB # 6133; AN ACT CONCERNING THE CREATION OF A FIRST OFFENDER STATUS FOR THOSE ACCUSED OF VIOLATING THE CONNECTICUT FAIR HOUSING LAWS.

I wish to thank Representative Larry Butler for submitting this proposal at my request. The matter of prosecuting certain violations of the Fair Housing Laws is an issue that I am hearing more frequently and is creating concern amongst responsible housing providers.

At issue is some allegations that Fair Housing violations are being made by tenants only seeking to retaliate against housing providers. I am proposing we create a new system where-as after an impartial investigation into an acquisition has been conducted by a neutral third party, “Less Egregious Violations” by a housing provider be required to receive education and training for first time offenders and not face fines and penalties.

Connecticut provides tenants with safe guards against retaliatory evictions but I do not believe we provide housing providers with any protection from tenants acting in retaliation for a housing provider performing legitimate actions in our statutes.

CTPOA seeks only to find common ground on this matter and believes strongly in protecting and observing our Fair Housing Laws. We also know housing providers do not understand all the details of the Fair Housing laws and were never educated formally with the law; therefore they are prone to making unintentional mistakes. We believe these violations do not lend themselves to having a bias towards any protected class and see education and training as a better outcome in these instances.

We thank you for your consideration of our position and please feel free to contact me for further clarification or comments on this and any other rental housing matter.

Sincerely,

Bob DeCosmo
President, CTPOA Inc.